Questions and AHRQ answers under AHRQ-12-1011 My Own Network powered by AHRQ

1. Does the Cost-Plus requirements require the prime contractor to have DCAA pre-award review or full DCAA Audit?
   Answer: Generally cost reimbursable contracts require the presence of government approved rate agreements. Without approved rates a firm fixed price award could be contemplated.

2. Under L.7 General Instructions Page 90 and 91 of 108 - L.7 requires an 11 point font, *double-spaced*, with lists of deliverables, person loading charts and similar material not double spaced. L.8'sTechnical Proposal Instructions admonish Industry not to merely paraphrase the requirements. Given a 50 page limit placed on the technical volume, where there are 7 pages of single-spaced L Instructions, and 23 single spaced pages of Section C Task 1 -6 requirements (excluding the 0.X paragraphs), plus Attachment E's 12 pages, and then Section H's security requirements, numbering nine pages (i.e. pages 57-65) – collectively, *the single-spaced requirements equal the response space allowed*, possibly creating a conflict with the "not merely paraphrasing" Instruction for Industry responses.. Given this physical page space reality and the Government's genuine interest in judging 'how' industry offerors would perform the technical work, given task and sub-task detail -- would the Government re-consider the double space requirement, and also allow tables and figures to depict data @ 10 point font *or* make the person-task-loading table an Appendix/Attachment to the Technical, proposal excluded from page count (for example, all Section H security requirements, H.7 – H.9)?
   Answer Appendices, cover letter and table of contents are not included in the page limit. Tables and figures may use no smaller than 10 point font.

3. L.7 General Instructions Page 91 of 108 The Government instructs Industry that for purposes of expediting the proposal evaluation, the proposal shall be submitted in four parts…each part separate and complete. At this juncture, the Section L paragraph sub stratification names two of the four parts as: (I) Technical Proposal, and (II) Past Performance Information, then breaks the sub-stratification and left justifies BUSINESS PROPOSAL, with no (III) or (IV) notation corresponding the prose sentence announcing 'four parts'. For purposes of creating clarity and the precise response organization to meet the Government's enabling of evaluation, would the Government specifically identify the four parts alluded to in the L.7 instruction, possibly calling all 'parts' as separate proposals (or volumes), and specifying what 'front matter' for each part (e.g. Part/Volume Cover Page, Table of Contents) best serves the Government's interests for enabling evaluation?
   Answer: see Amendment 2

4. L.8 Technical Proposal Instructions Page 93 of 108 Does the Government desire a submission of a Compliance Matrix or Cross-Reference Matrix as 'front matter' for the proposal as a whole (e.g. placed at front of Business Proposal), or for the Technical Proposal only, so that the Government may have an artifact to guide in the scoring of requirement compliance?
   Answer: The RFP does not ask for a compliance matrix.

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5. L.8 C Technical Proposal Instructions Page 98 of 108 Is it the Government's intent that the contract workforce ceiling on FTE headcount equate to 8.5 – 9, for the base year and Option Years 1 - 2?
Answer: No, AHRQ does not intend to place ceilings on FTE headcounts. We have provided FTE suggestions in order to assist the offeror in gauging the level of effort desired for the contract. The offeror should submit responses that are reflective of the proposed technical approach.

6. Related to the MONAHRQ solicitation (12-1011), do you know whether the scope of work for this opportunity is going to include the development of new healthcare measures? I had heard that it might be primarily related to Health IT, such as development and revision of the software itself and that the measure development portion of this work was going to be released in a separate solicitation. Is this true?
Answer: Refer to section C.I-2.5.2.1, page 25 "the MONAHRQ project will not directly engage in measure development."

7. We host all customer data on a commercial Service Cloud. Given the government's emphasis on the cost benefits of cloud hosting would AHRQ consider this type architecture as an acceptable solution for the MONAHRQ contract?
Answer: Currently, AHRQ does not host any MONAHRQ user data or measure results, as this raises privacy and confidentiality concerns. Please refer to solicitation pgs.8 and 24 for general goals of the MONAHRQ redesign effort and p 94 regarding the evaluation of technical approach (L.8.B, para 4).

8. Pg 10 Section 0.3.1.4 *Building the Science of Public Reporting.* (RFP Reads): In FY 2011, AHRQ is embarking on a three-year initiative funded through the ACA to build the science of public reporting. The initiative includes an array of grants and contracts designed to build the evidence base for public reporting. Question: Is the expectation that data and findings coming from this initiative be incorporated into MONAHRQ as they are determined or is it AHRQ's intent to wait until this initiative and report are final which would provide information for MONAHRQ modification in late 2013 and onward in the contract?
Answer: This is to be determined. However, "AHRQ sees substantial potential for MONAHRQ as a tool to facilitate local public reporting" (p. 8). Please refer to solicitation pgs.8 and 24 for general goals of the MONAHRQ redesign effort and p 94 regarding the evaluation of technical approach (L.8.B, para 4).

9. Pg 15 Section 0.4.4 MONAHRQ uses AHRQ's Quality Indicators windows software and 3M's APR-DRGs proprietary risk adjustment software which will not be included in version 4.0. How will the functionalities provided by these two applications be made available in Version 4.0? Should it be developed by vendors or will they be available for download separately? Or are they being eliminated?
Answer: Please refer to solicitation section 0.3.1.2 *AHRQ Quality Indicators*, p.10 paragraph 2. Refer to MONAHRQ Amendment 2, Section C.I-2 Software and data

10. Pg 22 Section I-2.2.1"Routine maintenance updates to files and applications embedded in MONAHRQ." Does this mean contractor is responsible for only integrating these updated files and applications in the updated MONAHRQ installer or does it also include updating the actual component files and applications?

Answer: According to the solicitation p.22, the contractor is responsible for those updates not provided by AHRQ.

11. Page 22 Section I-2.2.1"MS-DRG grouper software. This shall be provided by the contractor." Please clarify what "provided" means in this context.
Answer: Currently, MONAHRQ uses an embedded MS-DRG grouper that is proprietary but that can be rereleased. MONAHRQ uses it to group data for the hospital and county utilization paths. Its functionality will be maintained in MONAHRQ. The offeror will need to supply a replacement. (Please note that this grouper is different from the 3M APR-DRG grouper. The 3M grouper will be eliminated from MONAHRQ and not replaced.)

12. Pg 25 Section I-2.5.2.1"The contractor shall supply auxiliary applications, formatted data files, benchmarks or other resources required for each new type of data or measures. Once incorporated into MONAHRQ, such additional resources shall be updated and maintained."Is the contractor responsible for developing these "new auxiliary applications, data files, and benchmarks or other resources" or just incorporating these external resources into the MONAHRQ installer?
Answer: See the response to Question 10.

13. Pg 29 Section I-3.2.4.3 *Website organization and appearance.* (RFP states):   The appearance of the website shall be attractive and professional, and shall adhere to AHRQ and departmental guidelines. Question: *What are the AHRQ departmental guidelines and where can they be retrieved from?*
Answer: AHRQ guidelines can be found at http://www.ahrq.gov/news/pubcomguide/.

14. Pg 29 Section I-3.2.4.0 The requirement says "The contractor shall ensure that the MONAHRQ website is available 24/7 with the minimum down time. The contractor shall ensure that the MONAHRQ website is responsive with minimum downside delays." That raises the following questions: What is the definition of responsive? Is there a quantifiable number?
Answer: Minimum downtime and responsiveness are not strictly quantified. The intent is to ensure that MONAHRQ software and information are readily obtained from the MONAHRQ download website.

15. Pg 30 Section I-3.2.5.3 *Ongoing Activities.* (RFP reads): The contractor shall support all current MONAHRQ dissemination and outreach activities, including but not limited to the following . . .Support MONAHRQ at conferences and meetings through presentations, demonstrations, and booths. Provide webinars. The webinars shall be recorded and posted on the MONAHRQ website.   *Question:* 1) Support at how many conferences per year and what is the average duration of days on site at the conferences, 2) What is the anticipated number of webinars to be conducted throughout the year and the anticipated length, i.e., 30, 45, or 60 minutes.
Answer: Please refer to the Deliverable Schedule in Section F.2, page 47 as well as the MONAHRQ Amendment 2, C.I.3.2.5.2

16. Pg 100 Section L.9 The governments instructions read *" A list of the last five (5) contracts and subcontracts completed during the past three years and all contracts and subcontracts currently in process that are similar in nature to the*

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solicitation workscope." Can you please provide clarification regarding if offerors are required to submit five (5) contracts that have been completed within the last three years AND a particular number of on-going efforts or simply five (5) that are not to have been completed more than three years prior to proposal submission.
Answer: See Amendment 2

17. Pg 100 Section L.9 **Past Performance Information**. It is stated that the page limit is 5 pages, please clarify if it is 5 pages per past performance or 5 pages total for this section of the response.
Answer: 5 pages per Past Performance.

18. User manual- Can multiple year-based data sets be merged?
Answer: Currently, MONAHRQ is designed to handle a single calendar year of data. Please refer to the solicitation p.26 (Section C.I-2.5.2.2) for current priorities for expanding and enhancing MONAHRQ's data analysis, communication, and reporting features.

19. User manual- MONAHRQ currently supports auto-mapping of HCUP formatted data files. Are there any other data formats that are candidates for auto-mapping of the data elements?
Answer: Not specifically, but refer to solicitation p.24 for general goals of the MONAHRQ redesign effort. Refer to solicitation p.8 for general goals of the MONAHRQ project.

20. User manual- What is the approximate number of source lines of code (SLOC)?
Answer: Approximately 80,000 lines of C# source code, plus 60,000 SQL queries used to construct the MONAHRQ database.

21. Page 27 of 108, Section C, Task I-3. The title is provided as "Dissemination and outreach." In Section M (p 105), the activity is referred to as "Dissemination and assessment" and in Section L (p 96) the activity is referred to as "Dissemination and assessment" **Will the government please confirm the correct name for the activity?**
Answer: Task C.I-3 is correctly titled "Dissemination and outreach"

22. Page 27 of 108, Section C, 1-3 Dissemination and outreach. The first subtask is 1-3.0 Coordination with MONAHRQ planning, and the next subtask is 1-3.2, User Documentation. **Can the government confirm if subtask I-3.0 should be numbered I-3.1?**
Answer: The solicitation stands as written.

23. Page 27 of 108, Section C, 1-3 Dissemination and outreach. The first subtask is named "Coordination with MONAHRQ planning." In Section L (p. 96) the subtask is referred to as "Coordination with MONAHRQ strategic planning team." **Will the government confirm the full name of the subtask?**
Answer: The Subtask C.I-3.0 is correctly titled "Coordination with MONAHRQ Planning"

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24. Page 28 of 108, Section C. All of the sections between I-3.2 and I-4 seems to be mistakenly subordinated one numbering level (I-3.2.3 really should be I-3.3; I-3.2.3.1 really should be I-3.3.1, etc). **Will the government clarify the numbering for this section?**
Answer: The solicitation stands as written.

25. Page 30 of 108, Section C. The subtasks in I-3.2.6 are not numbered sequentially. **Will the government clarify the numbering for this section?**
Answer: see Amendment 2

26. Page 30 of 108, Section C. Task I-3.2.6 is entitled "Dissemination and Outreach." Section L (p97) refers to a task "Other Activities." **Can the government please confirm that these are the same tasks and the correct name is "Other Activities?"**
Answer: See amendment 2.

27. Page 31 of 108, Section C lists subtask I-3.2.8 "508 Compliance." Unlike other subtasks at this heading level, there are no corresponding instructions in Section L. **Will the government please clarify if they intend to provide corresponding instructions?**
Answer: For language on 508 compliance, see Section H.7.

28. p. 40 of 108, Section C. In the last OY, there is no mention of a requirement listed in prior OYs for SDLC to "…review and update as needed the standard SDLC process established during the previous contract year." **Will the government clarify if SDCL support is expected in the last OY as well?**
Answer: Please refer to the solicitation p.40, Section V-2, Subsection 1. *MONAHRQ 8.0*, as well as the MONAHRQ Amendment 2 for the Deliverables Table, Task Number I-2.1

29. Page 45 of 108, Section F.2. In the Deliverables table there are three items: *Initial requirements document for new version of MONAHRQ*, *First design review for new version of MONAHRQ*, and *Second design review for new version of MONAHRQ*. The first is an annual deliverable; the second two are listed as having just one due date each. **Should the second two be annual deliverables as well?**
Answer: The solicitation stands as written.

30. Page 47 of 108, Section F.2, Deliverable Schedule. Under MyQI Guides, the item *Create two MyQI Guides* are to be part of releases 6.0 and 7.0. However, the text states on page 38 that there will be two new QI Guides for release 8.0 as well. **Will the government clarify whether new MyQI guides will be created for version 8.0 and if so, will they constitute formal contract deliverables?**
Answer: Refer to MONAHRQ Amendment 2, Task Number II-2.5 *Create two MyQI Guides.*

31. Based on the $25.5M size standard we assume that large businesses are excluded from proposing on this contract. However, are they still eligible to be a subcontractor or would this represent a conflict of interest?
Answer: As stated in the cover letter of the RFP, this requirement is a total small business set-aside. Any prime offeror must be a small business.

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32. 0.3.1.2, last paragraph: Is the decision to remove the AHRQ QI software final? This seems to add complexity to the Host User, which is at odds with the goal of making the system easier for the Host User.
Answer: Yes.

33. 1-2.2, What are the plans for transition of the current code base, and for training the contractor on the current code base?
Answer: Please refer to MONAHRQ Amendment 2, Section C.I-2 Software and data.

34. 1-2.2.1, Should the cost of the MS-DRG grouper software be figured into the cost of the contract? And how does this affect the ability to open source the code?
Answer: Please refer to MONAHRQ Amendment 2, Section C.I-2 Software and data.

35. What is the expected budget or financial range of the contract? (either overall, for the initial year, or annually)
Answer: Offerors should propose a budget that corresponds to the technical effort proposed.

36. The 'small business concern' definition is stated as being based on 'size standards' in the solicitation. Page 2 refers to $25.5m: how should this be calculated: over a three year average, for the past fiscal year, other? Page 74 refers to 500 employees. Other than those two elements, is there any other aspect to the size standard?
Answer: The Small Business Administration (SBA) sets the size standards. Please refer to the SBA website for additional information. http://www.sba.gov/

37. Would AHRQ allow multiple overlapping project phases – as time-boxed iterations?
Answer: Yes

38. Do the Web Site accessibility guidelines also apply to desktop applications?
Answer: Yes, 508 compliance requirements apply to desktop applications.

39. Does AHRQ ever plan on supporting desktop users who do not use Windows?
Answer: Refer to solicitation p.24 for general goals of the MONAHRQ redesign effort. Refer to solicitation p.8 for general goals of the MONAHRQ project.

40. Are there any usage analytics currently available on the websites that have been produced in the past?
Answer: No, AHRQ has no usage analytics on MONAHRQ-generated websites.

41. IS AHRQ able to capture, or interested in capturing, any usage statistics or other data from the MONAHRQ generated sites to aid in performance improvement and research?
Answer: No, AHRQ does not currently do so. Refer to solicitation p.8 for general goals of the MONAHRQ project. Refer also to solicitation p.16, Section 0.5 *MONAHRQ dissemination, support, and adoption*, paragraph 1, and to solicitation p.19, Section I-1 *Planning and advisory functions*, under *MONAHRQ evaluation and assessment planning and activities*.

42. If MONAHRQ were open sourced, would AHRQ expect to retain control over any aspect, and if so what are the parameters of the control that is envisioned?

Answer: Please refer to solicitation p.27, Section C.I-2.6. *Making MONAHRQ open source*. Refer also to solicitation p.8 for general goals of the MONAHRQ project.

43. How much time does AHRQ require for approving deliverables?
Answer: AHRQ will approve deliverables within a timeframe that is appropriate and does not cause delay to the project.

44. Are there any help desk logs available so respondents can get a sense of the types of issues brought up by users?
Answer: Please refer to MONAHRQ Amendment 2, Section C.I-2 Software and data.

45. 11.   Is there a need for multiple host application users within an organization to access the host application?
Answer: Please refer to solicitation pgs. 8 and 24 for general goals of the MONAHRQ redesign effort and p 94 regarding evaluation of technical approach (L.8.B, para 4).

46. Can AHRQ describe the level of technical documentation that is available on the existing MONAHRQ tool. For instance, is source code fully commented? Although the RFP indicates that AHRQ does not currently release MONAHRQ source code, is possible that the source code will be released to the contract awardee? Do functional and technical specifications as well as architecture diagrams, etc., exist?
Answer: Please refer to MONAHRQ Addendum 2, Section I-2 Software and data.

47. It is known that there is a current multi-year contract to promote state implementation of MONAHRQ. Will this activity continue in parallel to support both expansion of the current version of MONAHRQ and the redesigned version of MONAHRQ?
Answer: Please refer to the MONAHRQ Amendment 2, Section I-2 regarding transitions from one contractor to another.

48. How is the equivalent capability for risk adjustment, accomplished in prior versions via the AHRQ QI software and proprietary 3M software going to be accomplished in MONAHRQ 4.0?
Answer: The risk adjustment performed by the AHRQ QI software and 3M software is only used in MONAHRQ for the AHRQ QI analytics, which is not expected to be included in MONAHRQ 4.0.

49. Has the current MONAHRQ codebase been audited recently to assess the quality of the underlying code and the long-term sustainability of the existing codebase, or established migration plans as Microsoft transitions away from the technologies underlying the current MONAHRQ platform?
Answer: No, It has not.

50. Does the MONAHRQ development team have full and current documentation of business logic embedded within the codebase?
Answer: Please refer to MONAHRQ Amendment 2, Section I-2 Software and data.

51. The RFP discusses open source technologies and open-sourcing the core platform. Would AHRQ be open to proposals based on transitioning the project to open-source technologies from the current Microsoft platform?
Answer: Please refer the evaluation of technical approach (L.8.B, para 4).

52. Would alternatives to the current downloadable-only platform be viable if the information privacy concerns could be adequately addressed by a vendor solution?
Answer: Please refer the evaluation of technical approach (L.8.B, para 4).

53. Is AHRQ able to share prior contract information, including dollar value of the contractor work performed to date which was specific to the MONAHRQ project?
Answer: No.

54. Based on the answer to the previous question, does this represent a funding level consistent with, above, or below the anticipated funding level for the life of the current opportunity?
Answer: Offerors should propose a budget that corresponds to the technical effort proposed.

55. In the interest of understanding what AHRQ is looking for in a new partner on this project, is it possible for AHRQ to provide any additional detail concerning the rationales for shifting from the current large business incumbent to a small-business set-aside?
Answer: In designating the MONAHRQ solicitation a small business set aside, AHRQ followed standard government acquisition procedures that encourage small business opportunities.

56. Based on our reading of the solicitation we're hoping to get a better idea of what type of partner AHRQ believes would be the best fit for the opportunity. Broadly speaking, does AHRQ envision this as primarily a web communications challenge, a data challenge, or a project management challenge? Or some combination of these? Accordingly, would AHRQ characterize this as an opportunity where a research-oriented firm vs. a web communications firm would be perceived as the best fit?
Answer: Refer to solicitation p.8 for general goals of the MONAHRQ project. Refer to solicitation p.24 for general goals of the MONAHRQ redesign effort. Refer to solicitation p.97, Section C, Qualifications of Proposed Staff. Refer to the section titled *Background Information* in MONAHRQ Amendment 2.

57. Is there a specific MS-DRG grouper software to be provided by the contractor or is it left to the discretion of the contractor?
Answer: It is left to the discretion of the contractor.

58. Is the plan of AHRQ to keep to the Microsoft .NET and Microsoft SQL technology stack or can the contractor propose other technologies?
Answer: The contractor is welcome to propose other technologies. Please refer the evaluation of technical approach (L.8.B, para 4).

59. Do the maintainers of the AHRQ QI software tools have any plan to provide an API that could be used in MONAHRQ versions 4.0 and later?
   Answer: There is no current plan either way.

60. How will MONAHRQ be represented to the coordinating center for the Building the Science of Public Reporting initiative? Will members of the contractor team be a part of that representation?
   Answer: The specifics of these interactions have not yet been determined.

61. Although the Learning Network for CVEs is mentioned, nothing is said about how it relates to MONAHRQ. Does AHRQ expect that the Learning Network for CVEs will influence MONAHRQ during the base year? If so, would you describe how it might influence MONAHRQ and how the MONAHRQ team might be expected to engage with the Learning Network for CVEs.
   Answer: Historically, the CVE Learning Network has been involved in MONAHRQ in two ways:
   1. A subset of CVEs has beta-tested and provided input on future versions of MONAHRQ.
   2. Typically, the CVE Learning Network conducts a webinar previewing each new MONAHRQ version.
   As the CVE Learning Network is a key and active part of the public reporting community, AHRQ expects that such interactions with MONAHRQ will continue.

62. Our team has a history of success delivering software using an agile SDLC, having used it at the several NIH clients and for other government customers. Would AHRQ have any concerns about using an agile SDLC for MONAHRQ?
   Answer: No, AHRQ would not have concerns about using an agile SDLC. (L.8.B, para 12, pg 95). Please refer the evaluation of technical approach (L.8.B, para 4).

63. As it looks toward the MONAHRQ redesign, can AHRQ share features or components of MONAHRQ that should be preserved, and those that should be removed? Is the redesign thought of as an expansion of current MONAHRQ functionality with the addition and removal of the features identified only, plus a change to an open source stack, or is the government seeking other changes to the software?
   Answer: Please refer to solicitation p.8 for general goals of the MONAHRQ project and p.24 for general goals of the MONAHRQ redesign effort. Please refer the evaluation of technical approach (L.8.B, para 4). Please refer to MONAHRQ Amendment 2 for additional assumptions.

64. What are the expected operating systems to be supported by the MONAHRQ redesign? Can the redesigned MONARQ be hosted software, or should it continue to be downloadable and locally installable?
   Answer: Refer to solicitation p.8 for general goals of the MONAHRQ project. Please refer to solicitation p.24 for general goals of the MONAHRQ redesign effort. Please refer to MONAHRQ Amendment 2 for additional assumptions.

End of Q and A

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